UNITED NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/SR.67
17 August 1993

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 67th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 25 January 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI

CONTENTS

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention (continued)

Initial report of Egypt (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.93-15324 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 11) (continued)

Initial report of Egypt (CRC/C/3/Add.6, CRC/C/3/WP.2) (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Egyptian delegation consisting of Mr. Naguib, Mrs. El-Guindy, Mr. Omar, Mrs. Hussein and Mr. Sirry took seats at the Committee table.

2. The CHAIRMAN invited the Egyptian delegation to respond to issues 15 to 33 in the list of issues to be taken up (CRC/C/3/WP.2), which related to section D (Civil rights and liberties) and section E (Family environment and alternative care) of chapter IV of the initial report of Egypt (CRC/C/3/Add.6):

Civil rights and liberties

(arts. 7, 8, 13-17 and 37 (a) of the Convention)

15. What specific measures have been taken to encourage the population to register births in rural areas and to mobilize public opinion in this regard?

16. Are there any legislative measures for protecting the identity of the child in accordance with article 8 of the Convention?

17. Please give clarifications on the exercise of the right to freedom of religion, particularly with regard to minorities, and on the Koranic schools.

18. Is parental consent required for the establishment of associations formed by children?

19. Does the legislation adequately provide for the protection of the child from information and materials injurious to his or her well-being, in conformity with article 17 (e) of the Convention?

20. Please provide information on procedures under which complaints about alleged cases of ill-treatment or disappearances of children in custody can be made and investigated.

21. What concrete steps have been taken to prevent the beating of children in detention centres for juveniles? Is this aspect covered in the Codes of Conduct for Law Enforcement Personnel and in their training?

Family environment and alternative care

(arts 5, 18, paras. 1 & 2, arts. 9, 10, 11, 27, para. 4, arts. 19, 20, 21, 25 & 39 of the Convention)

22. What is the Personal Status legislation with regard to religious minorities?

23. Who is responsible for the welfare of the child in the event of negligence on the part of the father? What legislative measures are taken in regard to this and the protection of the privacy of the child?

24. Have any women become heads of families after being widowed or divorced? If so, are there any specific measures for the protection of this category of women?

25. Are the views of the child taken into account in matters relating to the right of visit in the case of separation of the parents?

26. What facilities exist for family counselling and parental education?

27. What procedures exist for intervention by the authorities in cases when a child needs protection from serious abuse within the family? Can children lodge complaints concerning abuse or neglect?

28. What other steps are being taken to ensure the implementation of article 19 of the Convention?

29. Please give clarifications on reception centres for children in distress and on what happens to such children. Is there any system for integrating them into society when they reach majority, particularly with regard to employment?

30. What system is there for the regular monitoring of institutions of alternative care? What steps are being taken to ensure that staff working in such institutions are sufficiently trained and are informed about the Convention?

31. Is it envisaged to increase the allowances for needy families?

32. Please comment on the reservation entered by Egypt with regard to article 21 of the Convention.

33. Please indicate how the kafalah of Islamic law is implemented.

3. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), responding to issues 15 and 16, said that the Civil Record Act stipulated that every child had the right to a name and a nationality. Births must be notified to the public records office; any failure to comply with that rule was punished by the law. It did sometimes happen that citizens did not declare their children, especially in isolated

regions, but the numbers concerned were very low - hardly more than 5 per cent. Campaigns were conducted continuously to encourage citizens to register the birth of their children.

4. With regard to issue 17, she said the Constitution guaranteed everyone freedom of religion. There were no minorities in Egypt, but the population was divided into different groups, each with its own beliefs which were respected by all. It was prohibited to take measures prejudicial to the religion of any population group. Religious schools came under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Anyone who wished to gain a deeper knowledge of the religion of Islam could take theology courses at Al-Azhar University.

5. Turning to issue 18, she said that the Constitution guaranteed freedom of association provided that an association did not carry on clandestine activities or activities prejudicial to the established system. It was rare for children themselves to set up an association in Egypt, but they could join associations without the consent of their parents or guardians.

6. With regard to issue 19, she noted that children were protected by censorship against information, broadcasts or shows injurious to their well-being.

7. In response to issue 20 she said that cases of the disappearance of children were rare and punished by the law.

8. Responding to issue 21, she explained that, in addition to the provisions listed in the report (CRC/C/3/Add.6), measures designed to prevent the ill-treatment of children in detention centres for juveniles existed in Egypt. For example, a young person arrested by the police could not be questioned unless a social worker was present. Seminars were regularly organized with the assistance of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in order to improve the training of social workers.

9. Turning to issue 22, she said that the personal status of non-Muslims was governed by a set of provisions dated 9 May 1938.

10. In response to issue 24 she said that women who became heads of families received payments from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Egypt currently had 78,082 widows or divorced women, 1,169 women who had been deserted, and 3,423 women whose husbands were in prison. When certain conditions were met, such women could receive benefits. Furthermore, those who wished to work could attend centres which had been established for that purpose in all regions of the country.

11. In response to issue 25 she said that the right to visit in the case of separation of the parents was governed by article 20 of Act 25 of 1929. Under that Act both parents were entitled to visit the child, and that right passed to the grandparents if the child had no parents. Such visits were not compulsory.

12. With regard to issue 26, she indicated that family counselling centres existed whose purpose was to improve the family situation of children and the environment needed for their proper development.

13. In response to issue 29 she said that reception, observation and accommodation centres existed for minors who had fallen foul of the justice system. The staff of the centres examined the situation of such children before sending them to an appropriate institution, for example a training centre where they could learn a trade.

14. In the case of issue 30, training programmes were organized for people working in institutions of alternative care.

15. In response to issue 31 she said that the allowances for needy families were increased at the same time as civil service salaries, depending on the resources available and the country's economic policy.

16. On issue 32 she explained that the reservation entered by Egypt with regard to article 21 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child stemmed from the fact that adoption was illegal in Islamic shariah. The Ministry of Social Affairs provided the necessary care for children who had lost their families, at the level which could be expected in a normal family.

17. In response to issue 33 she said that the kafalah was a system of solidarity under which people in a position to do so must help people in need. The system was not one of charity or alms but one which helped to meet the needs of disadvantaged families.

18. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to put questions to the Egyptian delegation concerning the report and the oral responses.

19. Mrs. EUFEMIO, referring to paragraph 117 of the report, concerning the right to a nationality, asked how Egypt determined the nationality of children born to parents of different nationalities. She also asked whether the father's name was entered on the birth certificate of a child born to an unmarried mother. Noting that the Civil Record Act required all male citizens to obtain an identity card at age 16 but that women had to do so only if they wished to work, she asked what the purpose of the identity card was. Noting further that on marriage males had to exchange their identity card for a family book showing the names of their wife and children, she asked whether unmarried mothers were also entitled to a family book. Lastly, she asked for further information about the measures to prevent the kidnapping of children with a view to sending them abroad.

20. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that he would like further information about the measures taken to guarantee the freedom of religion in daily life. In most countries where there was a dominant religion there was always a risk that a minority would be subjected to discrimination either at school or at work. He would also like to hear more about the measures taken in practice to protect children against television broadcasts or any other information transmitted by the media which might be injurious to them. Lastly, it would be interesting to have more information about the action taken to prevent the ill-treatment of arrested or detained children. He wondered, for example, whether

international rules such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice or the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, if not incorporated in Egyptian legislation, were at least brought to the attention of law-enforcement officers. What measures were taken to ensure that such rules were observed? What happened if it was established that a prison guard had beaten a detained juvenile? Could the juvenile make a complaint? Did the forces of public order and the staff of detention centres receive adequate training?

21. Mrs. MASON asked the Egyptian delegation to explain what was meant in paragraph 116 of the report by "The Act stipulates that each child has a right to a name; and that such name may not be entered in the records if it implies contempt or insult to the dignity of the child or if it contravenes religious beliefs". Noting that children deprived of a family environment were provided with educational, psychological and health care from birth to age six, whereupon they were placed in alternative families or in appropriate institutions, she asked whether the reverse ought not to be the case, i.e. that children ought to be placed in families up to age six and then in a custodial institution. Citing paragraph 171 of the report to the effect that several governorates still did not have any custodial institutions, she asked what happened to orphans in those areas. Noting that the report spoke of fatherless orphans and fatherless orphans whose mothers had remarried, she asked what exactly was meant by "orphan" in Egypt. She would also like to know what penalties were provided in the case of the kidnapping of children and what was meant in Egypt by "street children".

22. Mr. KOLOSOV said that he would like to know who was responsible for supervising the staff of the custodial institutions for orphans and how the supervision was effected.

23. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt), responding first to Mrs. Eufemio's question about nationality, said that when the parents were of different nationalities the law stipulated that a child of an Egyptian father took Egyptian nationality. A child of an Egyptian mother and a foreign or unknown father could also take Egyptian nationality. The right to nationality was linked to the right to a name. If a child's father was unknown, there was no reason why he should not take the name of his mother's family.

24. Turning to the question of the identity card and the family book, he said that boys had a right to an identity card at age 16 and girls at age 18. The family book could be obtained only on marriage. Any woman head of family had a right to a family book listing all her dependants.

25. With regard to the reservations expressed concerning the choice of the child's name, he said that the name chosen must be socially acceptable and not imply contempt or insult the dignity of the child or of religion.

26. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to another question put by Mrs. Eufemio, said that it was very rare in Egypt for a child to be kidnapped in order to be sent abroad. There were no specific regulations on the subject, but any act

injurious to a person or in particular a child was in general terms prohibited by law. There were very few illicit transfers of children abroad and they were covered by the criminal law.

27. Specific measures had been introduced by the Ministry of Social Affairs with regard to children deprived of their family environment. Such children were placed in foster families or in institutions responsible to the Ministry and supervised by it. If there were no institutions of that type in the governorate where the child lived, he could be placed in an institution in a nearby governorate. Street children in particular were placed in such institutions. There were very few street children, despite the fairly extensive poverty in Egypt, because in most cases families did everything they could to take care of their children. The institutions were staffed by specialists in social affairs who, after completing their training, regularly attended seminars organized by experts from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

28. Mrs. MASON asked what was meant by "socially acceptable name". What kind of name might elicit contempt for its bearer or cause him serious psychological harm?

29. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that among certain superstitious people, in particular illiterate and ignorant people, the habit had arisen of giving a child a name implying contempt such as "donkey" or "little donkey", in the belief that that would increase the child's chances of survival. However, the child might be subjected to contempt and mockery by his fellows. The legislator had therefore imposed limits on the choice of name. The aim was to protect children rather than to impose rules establishing discrimination against a religion or ethnic group.

30. Mr. KOLOSOV said it was his understanding that in Egypt names must be "Muslim". Was that correct or was it possible to choose such names as Yuri or Mariana?

31. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that the name did not have to be of Muslim origin. Many children's names were of different origins (Christian, Jewish, Turkish, etc.). There were not in fact any "Muslim names" but only names taken from the Muslim or religious heritage, the names of the companions of the Prophet for example. Jewish or Christian first names were commonly found. New names were also coined from the Arabic language.

32. Mr. KOLOSOV asked what were the legal consequences of obtaining the identity card or the family book.

33. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) replied that every Egyptian had a right to a personal identity card if he was not married and had not established a family. A married man who was head of a family received a family book showing the names of his wife and children. An unmarried woman with children received a family book showing her own name and the names of her children.

34. Mr. KOLOSOV said that he understood that from a certain age all Egyptians had a right to a personal identity card. However, as soon they established a family they were entitled only to a joint document for the whole family - the family book - which was issued to the head of family. Was not

the fact that a child's only means of identification was a family book held by his father inconsistent with the provisions of the Convention, which stipulated that all children were entitled to an identity?

35. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that the issue of a family book did not prevent any member of the family from having a personal identity card.

36. Mr. KOLOSOV asked what the purpose of the family book was and in what circumstances and to which authorities it must be presented.

37. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that the family book doubled as a personal identity card for the head of family. The family card was presented, for example, in the case of sickness insurance formalities; the head of family also used it to prove that he was in fact the father or husband of a particular person and therefore authorized to deal with certain questions on his or her behalf. However, the presentation of an identity card was sufficient for cashing a cheque at a bank, applying for a driving licence at a police station, or completing various other formalities.

38. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) added that during wartime rationing the family book had been used as certification for the provision of food rations.

39. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS asked about the situation of children of parents who were not legally married - children who, because they had not been acknowledged, were not listed in a family book. Were their rights affected, with regard for example to access to social security, medical treatment or education? It also seemed that some children of non-Egyptian mothers took Egyptian nationality, while others did not. Might that not involve risks of discrimination, depending on the national origin of the children or the national origin or situation of the parents, in contravention of article 2 of the Convention?

40. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that under the Shariah rules a child received a birth certificate showing the names of the parents who had acknowledged him or her. The father could therefore have his child listed in the family book, and in due course, the child could obtain an identity card which would show the father's name.

41. Mrs. MASON asked whether an unmarried father could acknowledge his child. Could parentage be determined by the courts? If the father did not acknowledge the child, could the mother obtain a food allowance for the child?

42. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) said that if the father did not acknowledge the child, the mother could request the courts to rule on affiliation. Given the necessary proof that the child had been born of a liaison between the two parties, the courts could recognize the affiliation and that decision could then take the place of acknowledgement by the father. The usual practice was to offer the possibility of acknowledgement of the child in order to protect his or her interests.

43. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS asked for clarification about the situation of children of parents not legally married who had not been acknowledged and had therefore

not been entered in a family book. What was the position with regard to their rights? Was their exercise of such rights as access to social security, sickness insurance and education, for example, affected?

44. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that the law held that every child had a right to a birth certificate whether the father was known or not and whether the child was listed in a family book or not. In the case of a child who was not listed in a family book, the birth certificate served for identification purposes until the child began school and received a school card. The rights of such children were therefore no different from those of other children.

45. Mr. KOLOSOV asked what happened if a child did not go to school. Did he receive an identity card? From what age did Egyptian children obtain a personal identity card? At what age did a child attending school receive an identity card? How did a child who did not attend school obtain the card?

46. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that at the age of 16 all Egyptian citizens received an identity card whether they were attending school or not and whether they had a father or not. Before the age of 16 a child's name could be entered in the family's passport if he had to travel abroad. Before the age of 16 a child who did not attend school did not receive any identification other than a birth certificate.

47. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) added that from the age of 16 anyone not obtaining an identity card was liable to a penalty. The issue of the card did not depend on school attendance.

The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

48. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to Mr. Hammarberg, said that freedom of religion was guaranteed for everyone in her country. The concept of minority did not exist in Egypt. The various religions represented in Egyptian society were all respected by the law. Religious schools came under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and they taught courses in Islamic religion and the catechism. The marks obtained in such courses did not count towards the end-of-year results. Freedom of religion was also guaranteed within certain associations.

49. Referring to the scenes of violence in some television programmes and their impact on children, she said that all television programmes were reviewed in advance by censors to ensure that films intended for children did not contain scenes of violence.

50. With regard to the guarantees protecting young offenders against ill-treatment, she said that the law prohibited the beating of young offenders detained in special custodial institutions. The presence of social workers in the juvenile courts was designed to ensure that young people received advice and care which would set them on the right road and facilitate their reintegration in society.

51. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that he would like to know, with respect to the treatment of young offenders, what Egypt's position was concerning whipping and what possibilities of recourse were open to the victims of such treatment.

52. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to Mr. Hammarberg, said that the law prohibited whipping or even beating of children, no matter what offences they had committed. A request had recently been submitted to the Ministry of the Interior to lower the age of criminal responsibility. In fact, an increasing number of children under 16 were involved in drug-trafficking or tried to commit violent acts against other people. The request would probably be rejected, for the authorities believed that children were the victims of those who used them and that they should therefore not be penalized. Egyptian law protected children up to the age of 18. It prohibited the ill-treatment of children under 18 no matter what offences they might have committed.

53. Mr. NAGUIB (Egypt) added that a person who inflicted a whipping was liable to very serious punishment, with aggravating circumstances in the case of persons responsible for the education or guardianship of a child. The ill-treatment of children was prohibited, especially in schools. If that law was violated, the perpetrator could be brought before the courts.

54. Mr. MOMBESHURA asked what was the attitude of very orthodox Muslim communities on questions such as cutting off a hand or whipping.

55. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that there were no specific regulations on such questions. In principle, any form of physical aggression against a child was prohibited and could therefore be punished. Some punishments originated in Muslim law, which envisaged the removal of the right hand in the case of theft or even execution in other cases, but such punishments were not part of Egyptian law. The punishments envisaged in Egyptian law stemmed from French penal law and Italian law. However, there had been a number of changes to take into account Egypt's specific conditions. In fact, since Egypt had not had any institutions for the imprisonment of offenders or criminals, the sentences handed down against them had consisted of immediate physical punishment, but the punishments which had been applied for more than a thousand years in the Arabian peninsular were no longer used in Egypt.

56. Mr. HAMMARBERG noted with satisfaction that there were different interpretations of some aspects of the application of shariah (Islamic law) and that Egypt had adopted an attitude consistent with the spirit of human rights in that regard, since shariah included such punishments as whipping. With regard to the family environment and alternative care, he noted the existence of training programmes for persons required to work in specialized institutions. He further noted that children often suffered ill-treatment in their own families. He asked what practical measures were taken to protect children against such ill-treatment.

57. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to Mr. Hammarberg, said that many parents were unable to discharge their responsibilities as educators in a society which had serious social and economic problems and a very high rate of illiteracy. Some families in Egypt ill-treated their children, caused them physical suffering and incited them to commit offences. Since the ill-treatment of children was prohibited, the authorities tried to place them in a social rehabilitation institution.

58. The CHAIRMAN invited the Egyptian delegation to respond to issues 34 to 44 in the list of issues to be taken up (CRC/C/3/WP.2), relating to section F (Basic health and welfare) and section G (Education, leisure and cultural activities) of the initial report of Egypt (CRC/C/3/Add.6):

Right to health

(art. 6, para. 2, art. 18, para. 3, arts. 23, 24 and 26 of the Convention)

34. What concrete measures are being taken to remedy the problems with regard to health? What progress has been made and what major difficulties encountered?

35. What steps have been taken to limit the incidence of bilharzia and what progress has been made and difficulties encountered?

36. Are there any specific incentives offered to private medicine to support public medicine?

37. What measures are taken to combat traditional practices affecting the health of young girls, such as excision, infibulation and sexual mutilation?

38. What specific measures are envisaged regarding the education of handicapped children?

Education, leisure and cultural activities

(arts. 28, 29 and 31 of the Convention)

39. What is the State budget for education?

40. What measures are taken to remedy inequalities between girls and boys and between urban and rural areas with regard to education?

41. What measures are planned to improve the teaching system?

42. Are school disciplinary measures in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

43. Are the penalties laid down for parents' neglect of their children's education or child abuse actually applied? What is the recommended procedure?

44. Is there a State system for teaching the rights of the child at the various levels of education, including the pre-school level?

59. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), referring to issue 34, said that her country attached high priority to all health problems (diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, family planning, spacing of births, mother and child protection). A vast programme of compulsory vaccination was being carried out

against six diseases, including poliomyelitis, tetanus and hepatitis B. Prenatal instruction was given to mothers-to-be, together with advice to encourage them to breastfeed their babies.

60. In response to issue 35, she said that the incidence of bilharzia had fallen from 16.8 per cent in 1988 to 9.8 per cent in 1992. Twenty-one million people had been given examinations to detect bilharzia, which was caused primarily by water pollution, and additional efforts were being made to cope with the problem.

61. With regard to issue 37, she said that a ministerial decree prohibited doctors from performing female circumcision. The Ministry of Health was cooperating with national and international organizations concerned with the issue. A family planning association in Cairo organized seminars to make people aware of the consequences of female circumcision and infibulation, especially for people in rural areas and illiterate members of the population, among whom that kind of practice was most widespread. The national press and audiovisual media were also helping to increase awareness of the problem.

62. On issue 38, she said that the Ministry of Education was taking measures to improve school attendance by the disabled. The measures concerned 140 schools, in which 1,085 classes had been attended by more than 11,000 pupils during the 1990-1991 school year. The National Centre for the Development of Disabled Children was also preparing teaching programmes for such children. Poliomyelitis prevention services were being organized in hospitals. As far as possible, disabled children attended normal schools. Only the mentally disabled were placed in specialized institutions. The Ministry of Social Affairs also operated training centres for disabled children. The centres catered for 1,689 children, 1,082 of them under 16. According to a 1987 survey, 67 social reintegration centres were attended by 16,727 children. Training had already been given to 8,418 children. In addition, workshops were organized to train disabled children in carpet-weaving and handicrafts. Specialized centres for the mentally disabled were also in operation. There were a further 20 centres for the physically disabled located in all the governorates of the country, but many of the teachers did not have the necessary technical training to work with disabled children. Moreover, the institutions were too few in number and the operation of the centres was becoming increasingly difficult. Some 8 per cent of children under 15 were disabled. The 1992-1997 National Plan envisaged an improvement in services for such children, and the Egyptian delegation would transmit to the Secretariat a document describing a number of measures taken in that regard.

63. On issue 39, she said that the proportion of the State budget allocated to pre-university education had increased from 5 to 9 per cent between 1980 and 1990.

64. With regard issue 40, she said the Egyptian Constitution stipulated that education was a right guaranteed by the State. Primary education was compulsory, and parents or guardians who did not comply with that obligation were punished. However, girls, especially from rural families, did not attend school as diligently as boys; that was due mainly to the country's social and economic situation.

65. Turning to issue 41, she said that the Ministry of Education had drawn up a programme for development of the primary education system. A conference was to take place in February 1993 to establish the conceptual framework of the teaching system at the primary level with a view to improving teaching services. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood had submitted a request to the Ministry of Education for the programme to ensure inter alia that children were made aware of their rights, especially their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

66. On issue 42, she said that the school disciplinary measures in force in Egypt were in conformity with the provisions of the Convention. Children had to be made accustomed to a degree of discipline, but it was rare for punishment to be imposed. The general trend was to make educators aware of the need to understand children's problems better and to ensure that the disciplinary system improved the children's standards.

67. With regard to issue 43, she stated that the law made no distinction between the penalties for offences as such and the penalties for negligence or deliberate default.

68. Mr. MOMBESHORA asked what percentage of children of school age suffered from bilharzia and whether the health facilities in schools were adequate. He also requested information about the situation with regard to rheumatic fever. What were the main nutritional problems of pregnant women and what was Egypt's policy on prenatal care? Were the delivery rooms in the villages, which had been mentioned earlier, run by qualified staff? Had traditional midwives been integrated into the health system?

69. He asked whether Egypt was trying to incorporate in modern medicine certain practices of traditional medicine which might prove both effective and cheap. For the disabled, it seemed that the emphasis was placed on institutional care. Were there any programmes for the re-education and reintegration of the disabled in their home environment? Lastly, he would like to know what share of the national budget was allocated to education.

70. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to Mr. Mombeshora, said that 9.8 per cent of Egypt's population was affected by bilharzia. No figures on children were yet available, but surveys were currently being carried out to determine what proportion of children were affected by the disease. Unfortunately, the Egyptian delegation could not give any immediate information concerning rheumatic fever; it would make enquiries with the relevant national services. All regions of the country had mother and child protection centres where pregnant women could receive free food and advice on diet and family planning, and where they could also give birth attended by qualified staff. Since many women still preferred to have their babies at home with the help of traditional midwives, training seminars were being organized for traditional midwives to ensure that such deliveries took place in the best possible conditions.

71. There were no traditional medical practitioners in Egypt. Of course, traditional nostrums and practices were handed down from generation to generation, but most of the secrets of Pharaonic medicine had been lost. It was mainly in rural areas and in the south of the country that certain

traditions had lived on, especially with regard to the use of herbs and plants. Lastly, the share of the national budget allocated to education had risen from 5 per cent in 1981 to 9 per cent in 1991.

72. Mr. KOLOSOV asked for information about the life expectancy of men and women and of rural and urban dwellers, and about the birth rate.

73. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt) said that the population's average life expectancy was 62 to 65 years. The Egyptian delegation did not have any more detailed data, but it would try to supply some in the next report.

74. Mrs. EUFEMIO asked how many children died every year from diarrhoeal diseases. Since such deaths were due mainly to dehydration in newborn children, what action was being taken to make mothers aware of the importance of oral rehydration?

75. She also asked about the status of implementation of the programme to promote the health insurance system to permit the treatment of every child in the country regardless of cost and without regard to his financial abilities (para. 190 (f) of the report). Lastly, she asked for further information about the health measures introduced for the benefit of disabled children.

76. Mrs. EL-GUINDY (Egypt), replying to Mrs. Eufemio, said that the rise in the infant mortality rate was due largely to diarrhoeal diseases. That was why the Government had launched a vast campaign to make families aware of the problem and in particular to encourage parents to administer oral rehydration to children suffering from diarrhoea.

77. A project on the health insurance system was to start up within a few months; it would provide every pupil with a medical card enabling him to obtain all the medical services he required.

78. It must be admitted that disabled children had not received all the attention they deserved. However, a vast campaign for the early detection of disabilities had been launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. Those two bodies also provided assistance to disabled children's associations. For its part, the Ministry of Education had opened classes for disabled children.

79. Mrs. MASON asked whether children suffering from leprosy were ostracized and, if so, what action was being taken to correct the situation.

80. In view of the great importance which Islamic society attached to the virginity of girls, she would like to know what physical, social and psychological measures were taken to assist girls who had become pregnant following rape.

81. Mr. HAMMERBERG welcomed the importance which the Egyptian Government attached to the protection of the rights of girls and disabled children, as evidenced by the campaign against the traditional practice of excision and by the launching of a vast campaign for the early detection of disabilities. The

detection campaign should be accompanied, as far as possible, by an education campaign to help children whose disabilities had not been detected early enough.

82. Rather than placing disabled children in specialized institutions, efforts should be made to place them in schools attended by normal children. It was important not to favour material assistance for the disabled at the expense of human and psychological factors. It would be particularly interesting to know the extent to which disabled children were involved in the conduct of the activities organized for them.

83. On the question of education, he asked whether a debate was currently taking place in Egypt about the reasons why children dropped out of school and about ways of making school more interesting, for example by according greater importance to thinking and discussion and somewhat less to learning by rote.

84. Mr. KOLOSOV said that he would like to know the average birth weight of babies and to have more detailed and broken-down information about the population's life expectancy.

85. The CHAIRMAN invited the Egyptian delegation to reply to the remaining questions at the next meeting. He was glad that the Egyptian Government attached so much importance to children, as could be seen from the creation of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the efforts made to improve the statistics on children, and the emphasis given to education.

86. The Egyptian delegation withdrew.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.